

Collaborative Planning Grant: Resources of American Music History 2

The University of Pittsburgh and the Society for American Music propose a Collaborative Planning Grant to Advance Digital Resources in the field of American music collections and studies. We wish to bring together librarians, archivists, and scholars for the final stage of planning that has been in process for several years, toward developing a digital and sustainable reference tool for locating source materials in American music history. The University's Center for American Music, a library and museum within the University of Pittsburgh's Library System, will host the planning project; its partner is the Society for American Music, a constituent member of the American Council of Learned Societies. The Society maintains its headquarters at the University of Pittsburgh, and the staffs of the two organizations work closely together. The planning project will be led by the Director of the Center, the Executive Director of the Society, and a senior consultant, and will involve participants from other scholarly and professional organizations, libraries and museums.

Subject Matter

American music studies, a humanities field whose numbers of academic positions and publication titles are growing rapidly, draws on the disciplines of musicology, ethnomusicology, American studies, popular culture, and cultural history, among others. (See Dale Cockrell, "Can American Music Studies Develop a Method?" and Kay Kaufman Shelemay, "Response: New Recipes for American Music Studies," in the journal, *American Music* 22/2 (2004).) The field has an encyclopedia, *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 4 vols. (London: Macmillan Press, 1986), now being revised, and two core scholarly journals: *American Music* (1983–), and the *Journal of the Society for American Music* (2007–), both initiated by the Society for American Music. This Society, the field's scholarly organization founded in 1975, has members in 47 states and the District of Columbia as well as ten other nations.

Resources of American Music History: A Directory of Source Materials from Colonial Times to World War II, compiled by D.W. Krummel, Jean Geil, Doris J. Dyen, and Deane L. Root (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981; hereafter, RAMH), was the first major reference work to provide access to the primary materials of American music history, and thus quickly became a major reference tool for scholars, students, and librarians. Hitherto such materials were referenced only incidentally by surveys and directories of library resources such as the National Union Catalog of Manuscripts at the Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>, hereafter NUCMC), reference guides, and footnotes within research studies in American music and culture.

RAMH was created through a national research project. (See D. W. Krummel, "Little RAMH, Who Made Thee? Observations on an American Music Census," *Music Library Association Notes* ser.2, 37/2 (1980).) Its entries describe the contents and scope of archival papers, publications, visual materials, and sound recordings in 1,689 repositories (including some private collections), and it cites hundreds of other collections of secondary materials. RAMH was published in book form and was issued in only one edition.

Dr. Krummel directed the original RAMH project, initiated in 1976 for the Music Library Association (MLA), endorsed by the American Musicological Society (AMS), funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, and hosted by the University of Illinois. The research to compile the directory was accomplished through exhaustive bibliographical searches with the help of card catalogues, Union Lists of library holdings, telephones, photocopiers, and electric typewriters. The staff skimmed every dissertation, book, article, and pamphlet it could find on an American-music topic; mailed questionnaires to librarians and archivists listed in the directories of the American Library Association, American Museum Association, American Association for State and Local History, and other national organizations; visited many librarians and archivists in colleges, historical societies, public libraries, and other institutions across the country; compiled and sorted the data in filing cabinets; and telephoned all repositories it identified as having significant materials, before writing and editing the entries for the directory. Thus, in addition to representing paper-based archives and finding aids, RAMH reflected manual information processing. (See "RAMH Materials Coming to MLA Archives," *MLA Newsletter* 133 (May/June 2003) <http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/publications/newsletter/MLANEWS133.html>.)

Assessment of Need

RAMH was an essential tool for American music studies, prepared in the era just prior to computer-based access to repositories' historical collections and Internet communications. It stimulated libraries and private collectors to acquire and describe more source materials in American music, many of which are not, however, represented in the libraries' electronic catalogs. A digital version of RAMH, that extends it beyond World War II and includes provisions for continuous updating, is now urgently desired.

The audience for an electronic RAMH (working title: RAMH2) would be international, including students and scholars of American studies throughout the world. Within the United States, it would certainly include music librarians, but also the large and growing numbers of college students and faculty of American music, as well as K-12 teachers and students who work with source documents. No other bibliographical tool provides descriptions of the source materials for research and study for the full field of American music.

Since its initial publication as a single volume more than a quarter century ago, numerous scholars and librarians have expressed interest in expanding and updating RAMH, and technology has completely changed. Some of the paper-based archives it describes are now accessible electronically, whether in databases or through finding aids. And because RAMH was part of a bicentennial-era effort to encourage libraries to preserve the nation's heritage, repositories have become far more active in acquiring and processing material related to American music, while educational and presenting organizations have increased their support for its performance and research. American music is now the most frequently requested subject specialty for Historical Musicology/Ethnomusicology positions listed in the College Music Society's *Music Vacancy List* (see Cockrell, cited above, pp. 276-7). A substantial quantity and variety of American-music source materials have been added to repositories since they were surveyed for RAMH, while the need for access to them by students and researchers has grown enormously.

The increase in materials combined with new developments in organizing them has been both a help and a hindrance to scholars. At present, comprehensive research entails hours of Internet searching combined with luck. We need a complex gathering online of heterogeneous resources (musics of all kinds including dance) and formats (expanded now to include audio, visual, and digital collections) in many disparate locations that use vastly different systems to represent and find their holdings.

Libraries have focused their primary efforts to provide electronic access in two ways: 1) cataloging (through OCLC's WorldCat, to a networked union catalog); and 2) digitizing collections with linked finding aids available on their websites. American sheet music is particularly well represented among digital projects, through the Sheet Music Consortium (<http://digital.library.ucla.edu/sheetmusic>) and the Library of Congress's American Memory website (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>). But sheet music is only one format, and it favors popular-music imprints among all the formats and genres in which Americans have created music or have left tangible sources of their musical activities. We would want RAMH2 to embrace the eclectic formats described in the original volume: song books, hymnals, ensembles' performance libraries, personal papers, photographs, music manuscripts, business records, research files, sound recordings, programs, oral-history archives, press clippings, indexes, finding aids and much more.

In a survey of the needs of scholars in the performing arts conducted in 2000 by the National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH), the one most frequently expressed was "the ability to access primary sources, on-line, with concomitant searchable database, either for full-text or keywords." (From the summary of questionnaires completed by researchers in the performing arts, compiled by Robert Keller, at <http://www.ninch.org/bb/field/performing/questionnaire.html>, accessed Dec. 15, 2007). The purpose of this collaborative planning-grant proposal is to create the plan for developing the American music history primary sources database.

Librarians as well as scholars have on several formal occasions discussed ways to maintain and update RAMH's information in a manner that would serve repositories as well as researchers. The applicants proposed a session at the joint annual meetings of the Society for American Music and the Music Library Association (March 2007), which was enthusiastically accepted by the program committees and which attracted an overflow audience with active Q&A participation by dozens of attendees. One senior librarian's response to the enthusiasm there was, "They're ready to march on Washington to make this happen."

In earlier efforts to address this need, the Music Library Association's Resource Sharing and Collection Development Committee appointed a Task Force for American Music Archives (see the *MLA 2004 Annual Report*, p.21, http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/pdf/AnnualReport_04.pdf). Its unpublished report of September 2, 2005, noted that steps toward a planning grant had already been undertaken. In 2005, MLA's Board of Directors passed a resolution supporting a planning grant for an electronic RAMH2; that same year, the boards of the Society for American Music and the American Musicological Society passed similar resolutions.

RAMH2 is on the agenda for the Consortium of Centers for American Music, an informal alliance, when it gathers February 28, 2008, during the annual meeting of the Society for American Music.

National Impact and Intended Results

RAMH2 will address the need for locating current information about primary sources in American music, whether in libraries, museums, or private collections, a particular concern to the growing number of students, scholars, and music librarians. The planning phase of this project will address issues related to accessibility of the materials by a global audience. It will determine how to engage the wider scholarly community in building these resources so that the end result will be available to all online by some intelligent means of discovery, will incorporate the needs of all who study these primary source materials in American music, and will continue to meet these needs in the future.

By providing access to source materials in American music, RAMH2 would complement the major reference tools for research in music history, which are largely devoted to secondary literature (e.g., *Répertoire international de littérature musicale* (RILM), *Répertoire international de la presse musicale* (RIPM), *Music Index*) and do not have a national focus. Moreover, by providing a central database for American music source materials, RAMH2 would stimulate the interaction among repositories of these materials. Like the first RAMH volume, it will no doubt raise awareness among music librarians of the benefits of collecting regionally significant source materials, and thereby stimulate the growth of holdings in American music.

Librarians internationally are creating innovative information systems through technology. For example, a consortium of institutions has developed The Archives Toolkit (<http://catalogosl.wordpress.com/2007/10/01/archives-toolkit/>), and the University of Illinois developed Archon (<http://www.otm.uiuc.edu/techs/techdetail.asp?id=350>), both to allow institutions to share information about their archives. The International Association of Music Libraries (IAML) is working on a world-wide music-archives harvester project, so that anyone anywhere can search the music archival papers of any participating library (see "IAML, Access to Music Archives," http://www.iaml.info/activities/projects/access_to_music_archives).

In the United Kingdom and Ireland, the Concert Programmes Project Online Database (www.concertprogrammes.org.uk) has been launched in an attempt to document the program holdings of major libraries, archives and museums in selected regional centers. The database currently offers descriptions of some 5,500 collections of music-related performance ephemera held by 53 institutions, including the British Library, the Royal College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music, the national libraries of Scotland and Ireland, the Bodleian Library and Trinity College, Dublin. The database covers material from venues in some 80 countries worldwide, revealing the full diversity of institutional holdings and making this a truly international resource.

But none of these projects will identify American music specifically, or delineate the source materials for the study and utilization of our nation's music. Nevertheless they present useful

models upon which the planning group may develop more appropriate solutions. Some music librarians have sought to address this need locally by building in-house databases, creating Websites that are accessible globally if you know where to look, or searching collection-level records in OCLC with enough access points. The search tactics at the moment are a patchwork. RAMH2 will be innovative because it will take a different tack, to involve best practices in collaboratively produced technology and information, including wikis. The planning supported by this grant would bring together leaders in developing the best practices for this field, to determine solutions that can be pursued collaboratively, both for harvesting what is already available and for creating a new data structure accessible to all. The goals of the new data structure are both creation and discovery, i.e. providing a tool for the collection and description of source materials in American music history, and successful searching and finding what you want.

Thus, one impact will be on musicologists, librarians and archivists working toward a shared vision. Another is the necessary development of a thesaurus, an authority control for names and subjects, and possibly forms/genres. The music literature indexes and library catalogues pioneered this task as they made the transition from print to electronic search strategies. But it has not been done specifically for American music, and as D. W. Krummel pointed out in his 1980 essay about RAMH (cited above), the logic structure of a directory of source materials both relies on such authority control and—by creating and evolving such a tool—contributes it to the field in return.

Project Design and Evaluation Plan

The foundation for this project has already been laid; the key project leaders, organizations, and major users have been identified through the various conferences and articles cited above. The planning process will involve formalizing the work that has been previously accomplished, including validating the needs expressed, and determining the design and technical requirements. The main focus of the planning of this project will be a planning conference, which would bring together key individuals representing various organizations and user groups that have a vested interest in the implementation and success of RAMH2.

We have organized the planning into the following steps:

1. Identify organizations, user groups, and individuals

For the purposes of the planning grant, the initial organizations involved in RAMH2 are the Society for American Music and the University of Pittsburgh. During the planning process we will identify other organizations, including research institutions that may become partners, to be involved in the development of RAMH2 and to share in the design and development of this massive resource-intensive project. The size and focus of such partners will be determined during the planning process when the overall requirements have been established.

Representatives from the following user groups will be selected to validate the requirements of the RAMH2 during the planning process: 1) computer and usability specialists with experience in building digital libraries, bibliographic databases, and cooperative projects among several

institutions; 2) librarians and archivists who have collaborated with each other and with these specialists to design such projects; 3) leaders in our users' community, including scholars and practitioners active in the Music Library Association (MLA), the Society for American Music (SAM), the American Musicological Society (AMS), and the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM); 4) major American music research centers and archives throughout the country, including the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the American Antiquarian Society, the Center for Popular Music at Middle Tennessee State University and others; 5) relevant individuals at such organizations as OCLC, the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC), and the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences. Additional individuals from related user groups may be identified during the planning, and will be invited to join if appropriate.

Each of these representatives would contribute ideas and perspectives on the requirements for the design of RAMH2. A major task of the planning will be to determine the best model and site for situating RAMH2 as an ongoing service accessed by the Internet. The University of Pittsburgh Library System has expressed interest in hosting the electronic RAMH2 as part of its digital libraries initiative, and Tim Deliyannides, Head of the University Library System's Department of Information Systems, will participate in the all aspects of the conference.

The planning for RAMH2 would take into consideration the fact that the national cataloging rules are currently changing from the Anglo American Cataloging Rules (AACR21) to those under the rubric of Resource Description and Access (RDA), based on the International Federation of Library Association's standards known as Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR). Furthermore, no single metadata standard exists to describe and collocate musical primary sources in all formats in archives and libraries. This project would seek to determine the best structure for bridging these worlds.

Additionally, we would want to involve OCLC's Research division to investigate whether the NUCMC model (where non-OCLC member libraries and individuals have searching privileges to collections already cataloged on OCLC) could be adapted for RAMH2, and seek advice from those in other countries who have established national models for online guides to music in collections and archives.

2. Validate previously stated goals/needs and identify key experts

The planning process will continue the discussion from the March 2007 MLA/SAM joint session on RAMH2. The summary of this important meeting would be distributed to selected experts in the field, who would be invited to write position papers on the following topics, to be distributed in advance of the conference. These papers will help create focus and a shared agenda among such a disparate group. These papers would begin to:

- (1) Identify the scope, types and quantity of materials which would be included in RAMH2;
- (2) Identify existing standards for their description and access;
- (3) Determine the tools needed to collect, store, and refresh that data continuously; and
- (4) Establish what kind of online searching users would need to access the information.

We have developed a preliminary list of experts in these areas, but would want to consult with them and others on desired contents of the position papers. Topic (1) would be addressed by two

experts in libraries, archives, special collections, and museum collections. These may include Brenda Nelson-Strauss: Indiana University, formerly Chicago Symphony Orchestra Archivist, and a recent president of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC, sound recordings, archives of various formats, performing-arts organizations), George Boziwick: Chief, Music Division, New York Public Library, formerly head of its Americana Collection (Americana collections, special collections, museum collections), Susan Vita, cataloger, formerly head of Special Materials Cataloging at the Library of Congress and now Chief of its Music Division. For Topic (2) we would approach a metadata specialist such as Jenn Riley, Metadata Librarian; Digital Library Program; Herman B Wells Library, Indiana University, who has worked on metadata for several cooperative digital music library projects (Variations, Sheet Music Consortium, EVIADA, Sound Directions, as well as photographic collections. Topic (3) would be addressed by a digital library technician, such as Jon Dunn, Assistant Director for Technology; Digital Library Program; Herman B Wells Library, who was the first to work on Variations, and has continued with responsibilities for that project as it has become cooperative; he has been involved as a leader in the same projects as Jenn Riley. Finally, topic (4) would ideally be covered by a researcher in American music who is also a librarian who understands database structures. The list of considered scholar/librarians includes: Mark McKnight; Glenn Patton (OCLC); Stephen Davison, director of UCLA's Digital Library, including the Sheet Music Consortium project, and formerly of UCLA's special collections in music; Mark Clague, University of Michigan, Project Director of the second edition (in progress) of *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, formerly the managing editor of the series of music editions, *Music in the United States of America* (MUSA); John Spitzer; Mark Katz; Tim Brooks; and James Cassaro.

Once the papers have been written and distributed, we will solicit responses to the papers to help us formulate conclusions and identify additional research needs in advance of the conference. The conference agenda would be organized based on the above participants and topics. Invitations to the planning conference would then be extended to the appropriate individuals. We will propose information sessions to the program committees for the annual meetings of the MLA in Chicago and SAM in Denver prior to the conference.

3. Planning Conference

The main focus of the planning for this project would take place at a planning conference to be held in Pittsburgh in May 2009, spread over approximately two days of meetings. The planning conference would be led by a team of musicologists, librarians, and archivists, and bring together experts from musical organizations, archives, informational or library organizations, and technology specialists.

The work prior to the conference would facilitate the discussion and direct the participants toward conclusions necessary for the writing of the subsequent grant application.

During the planning conference we would obtain consensus on the overall goals of the project. Using the data obtained previously and the position papers, we would organize discussions leading to a plan for gathering requirements for data, as well as the design and development of the database and the thesaurus guiding the project; to establish criteria for the test activities and

evaluation of the project; and determine a preliminary schedule. We would also initiate discussion pertaining to the sustainability of the project. The conference will mandate that usability studies be built into the grant for the actual preparation of the directory, so that feedback is built into each of the successive stages. Only after all of these discussions take place could further proposals be created to take the necessary steps to bring RAMH2 to fruition online.

4. Post-Conference

The close of the conference would include a brief session asking participants to consider the design of the conference itself, as well as the most significant ideas that emerged, and electronic questionnaires would be distributed immediately soliciting further written evaluation. After the conference, work on the plans formulated by the participants would continue. The recorded conference proceedings would be transcribed and sent to the attendees, asking for feedback and evaluation. Once the participants have commented on the proceedings, reports would be written for the professional newsletters (MLA, SAM, and others), seeking evaluation and comment from a broader audience of RAMH users.

The dissemination of the materials and the subsequent comments would guide the formation of specific plans and directions, as well as budgetary and implementation schedule considerations for the proposal to fund the entire project. Results of the planning conference may also include plans for extended collaboration with other research universities.

The single most obvious, measurable outcome of the conference would be the success of the funding proposals, to be developed afterwards, that would lead to the creation of the best possible RAMH2, in the eyes of both creators and users.

Project Resources: Budget, Personnel, and Management

The responsibility for the implementation of the RAMH2 planning conference would reside in the Center for American Music at the University of Pittsburgh, as the lead partner in this proposal. Acting as the host for the planning conference, the Center would organize the logistics, disseminate the outcomes of the meeting, and assemble the information toward an implementation grant. In addition to staff time, the budget would primarily cover the costs associated with bringing together the participants needed to plan the project. Travel and subsistence comprise the majority of the budget, with services and supplies making up the remainder.

The principal personnel are Dr. Deane L. Root, Director of the Center for American Music; Dr. Mariana Whitmer, Executive Director of the Society for American Music; and Mary Wallace Davidson, acting as a consultant to the project. Dr. Root has been an active member of the MLA, AMS, and SAM since the 1970s, a librarian and museum director since 1982, and is Professor of Music and of History at the University of Pittsburgh, specializing in American music history. He is a co-author of the original RAMH volume. In addition to being Executive Director of the Society for American Music, Dr. Whitmer is currently Project Coordinator at the Center for American Music at the University of Pittsburgh. In this position she is responsible for initiatives related to developing the use of the Center's collection, and for bringing American

music to scholars and educators. Mary Wallace Davidson, a music librarian *emerita*, has also long been an active member of both MLA and SAM, a director of two major music research libraries (1984 – 2000), and a principal investigator in federally funded cooperative bibliographic projects and the expansion of a digital music library.

The University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) is interested in hosting the electronic RAMH2, as part of its digital libraries initiative, and would be involved from the onset of the project to insure that the plan includes the appropriate technical resources. Dr. Rush G. Miller, University Librarian, to whom Dr. Root reports, has approved the idea, and members of the Center's staff have met with the ULS technical staff leaders, Tim Deliyannides and Ed Galloway, who have both provided input to this proposal and will be key participants in the planning conference.

The planning of a major project, such as this, involving a diversity of materials residing in different archives, museums, and libraries; with a national (perhaps even international) scope will necessitate qualified personnel who will guide the planning. There will need to be some flexibility to ensure that as new ideas and requirements are generated, we can react to them by bringing in other scholars and consultants. We have identified the principal project personnel who will be organizing and guiding the process, along with those participants whose expertise and work in the field of American music is invaluable. However, other personnel may be required to participate in the planning, and they will be identified throughout the course of the year.

To insure that we consider the overall scope and impact that this digital project will have, we have identified an initial set of organizations whose input into the planning phase is critical. The following list is representative, but not definitive and not all-inclusive:

American Antiquarian Society
American Musicological Society
American Music Research Center, University of Colorado–Boulder
Association of Recorded Sound Collections
Center for Black Music Research
Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University
Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University
International Association of Music Librarians
Library of Congress
Music Library Association
National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences
New York Public Library
OCLC
Society for American Music
Society for Ethnomusicology